

the prize of a silk dress and a picture hat. And some of the young people put their heads together and decided to have Lizzie win the prize.

"You see, Lizzie was a sort of reproach to Haversham with her dowdy ways, and they thought it would teach her a lesson. Everybody knew she was as homely as sin—and yet it wasn't exactly homeliness, but a sort of dissipatedness. I remember once actually thinking her pretty. That was—let me see! Why, now I recall it, that was when I met Lizzie and Alf Perks walking to the picture show together.

"Well, the long and the short of it was, everybody began sending in coupons naming Lizzie Smith as being the prettiest girl in Haversham. Everybody in town almost was in the secret except Lizzie. I thought it kind of mean myself, because, if she was a scarecrow, there wasn't no sense rubbing it in. Maybe some of the girls wanted to get even with her for walking off with Alf Perks that day. Anyhow, the fact remains that, when the competition came to a close Lizzie Smith was voted the prettiest girl in town with 857 votes; Susie Riley was second, getting only 24.

"Of course, Susie didn't care. She knew she was the prettiest, and, for the matter of that, each of the girls in town thought that she herself was the prettiest. There might have been some fighting and heart-breaking over the matter if it hadn't been arranged to vote Lizzie the prettiest girl. When I heard the result I screamed. Lizzie, who'd never had a bean, the prettiest girl in Haversham! The joke was on her and no mistake.

"'She'll leave town, sure,' says Cy Holt to me, as we read the announcement. 'Nobody but a hippopotamus could stand for a thing like that and survive. And Lizzie ain't no hippopotamus. I saw her crying after Alf Perks turned her down. She was going into town, and the tears was just streaming.'"

"Now, you may have heard it said that an evil thought turns back to the person that thinks it. And in this case the plot proved a boom—boom—boomerang. Ain't that the thing you throw that comes back and hits you? Well, Lizzie Smith's silk dress, and hat duly arrived by the new parcel post, and, being only a woman, if she was a scarecrow, she put them on. Miss Georgine Flynn told me she thought she'd wear out her pier mirror, she stood looking at herself so long in it. Then Lizzie took the dress and hat off and put on her old rags and hiked into town. We had been watching to see what she'd do. In she goes to the shop of Miss Peters, the women's outfitter.

She hadn't been gone five minutes, carrying a whole raft of parcels, when all Haverham was in the shop to find out what she'd bought. Some folks are so snoopy, you know. I asked Miss Peters. Well, you could have knocked me down with a feather! She'd spent five and twenty dollars. She'd bought underwear and shoes and gloves and jabots and handkerchiefs and waists! Say! I met Lizzie that evening on the street.

"'Why, what's happened, Lizzie Smith?' I asked her. The shock was terrific. She was all dolled up like an actress.

"'Haven't you heard?' she answered. 'The Argus has voted me the prettiest girl in Haversham by a majority of 833 votes. My! I never dreamed that I was pretty at all. Did you think me pretty?' she asks, throwing back her head.

"'Not so as you would remark it,' I wanted to say, but I didn't. For Lizzie was standing under the big electric light in front of Hi Taylor's drug store, and the change in her struck me all of a heap. Pretty? You bet she was. I'd never seen such a transformation in my life. In her silk dress and the picture hat, and the new gloves, and the other things, she looked like a queen. All the droopy look to her mouth had gone, and her